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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 493  
By Scroggs

A RESOLUTION to express the intent of the General Assembly to support the expansion of the number of hardware secure beds for female juvenile offenders and serious and violent offenders in the Department of Children's Services youth development centers.

WHEREAS, statistics for the nation and for Tennessee indicate that the female juvenile offender population is the fastest growing juvenile offender category while offenses committed by females are also increasing in seriousness; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee currently has only 24 beds available for female juvenile offenders, but the availability of federal funding affords the Department of Children's Services the opportunity to expand its capacity for female juvenile offenders by 16 additional secure beds; and

WHEREAS, since 1989 the Tennessee Department of Children's Services has complied with an agreed-upon cap of 588 hardware secure beds within its four youth development centers; and

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WHEREAS, while secure bed space is generally available within the system as a whole, the demand for secure beds in Middle Tennessee for serious and violent juvenile offenders has outgrown current availability and youth must be sent hundreds of miles from their homes for detention and treatment; and

WHEREAS, the availability of federal funding affords the Department of Children's Services the opportunity to expand its capacity to house serious juvenile offenders at the Woodland Hills Youth Development Center in Nashville; and

WHEREAS, the Juvenile Justice Reform Commission supports the efforts of the Department of Children's Services to obtain federal funding to increase the number of hardware secure beds for female juvenile offenders in the Department's youth development centers and to increase the number of secure beds for serious and violent offenders at the Woodland Hills Youth Development Center; and

WHEREAS, the increase in secure beds will augment the recommendations made by the Juvenile Justice Reform Commission with regard to a comprehensive plan for serious, violent juvenile offenders; and

WHEREAS, the Juvenile Justice Reform Commission recognizes that while it is not the ultimate long-term solution, the expansion of the number of secure beds is an appropriate response for the demands of the population served by DCS; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we endorse the recommendations of the Juvenile Justice Reform Commission in support of the Department of Children's Services, efforts to secure federal funding to increase the number of hardware secure beds for female juvenile offenders at the DCS youth development centers, and for increased secure beds for serious and violent juvenile offenders at Woodland Hills Youth Development Center in Nashville.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an enrolled copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Commissioner of the Department of Children's Services with this final clause omitted from such copy.